

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 924

UD 033 708

AUTHOR Dukess, Laura F.
TITLE How To Choose a Public School: A Guide for Parents of Young NYC School Children.
INSTITUTION Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., Long Island City.
SPONS AGENCY Charles Hayden Foundation, New York, NY.
PUB DATE 1998-00-00
NOTE 17p.; Also sponsored by Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Public Schools; *School Choice; *Special Needs Students
IDENTIFIERS *New York City Board of Education

ABSTRACT

This pamphlet guides New York City parents through the basic steps in choosing a public school for their children. Every child 6 years of age or older in New York City must attend school, and children may be enrolled in kindergarten the year they turn 5. A limited number of preschool spaces are available. Legal residency is not a requirement for public school attendance in New York City; children who are undocumented aliens or the children of undocumented aliens are eligible for the New York public schools, as are homeless children. The steps to consider in choosing a public school are: (1) find out the school district in which the child resides; (2) find the school the child is entitled to attend; (3) find other schools or programs that may be appropriate; and (4) apply to schools in other districts if so desired. Extra steps may be needed for disabled children, children who need bilingual instruction, and gifted children. Parents who have chosen a school should remain involved to ensure that their children receive the best possible education. Helpful telephone numbers are listed. (SLD)

How to Choose a Public School

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

Jill Chaifetz
Advocates for Children of NY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 443 924

A Guide for Parents of Young NYC School Children

UD033708

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

► This pamphlet guides you through the basic steps in choosing a public school for your child. It does not list, rate or recommend specific schools. But it contains important information that will help you find the school that's best for your child.

► Most likely, you will have questions that aren't covered in this pamphlet. However, it's easy to obtain answers. Refer to the helpful telephone numbers on the back page.

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



First Things First: Is your child entitled to attend New York City Public School?

► **AGE REQUIREMENTS:** Every child who is six years of age or older and lives in New York City must attend school. However, you may enroll your child in kindergarten the year he or she turns five. In addition, some schools offer pre-kindergarten programs beginning at age four. Keep in mind that spaces for these early-childhood programs are limited and you must sign up in advance.

► **RESIDENCY:** Legal residency is not a requirement for public school attendance. If you or your children are undocumented aliens, your children may attend New York City public schools without showing documentation of legal residency.

► **SPECIAL NEEDS:** Children who have physical or learning disabilities, do not speak English or are intellectually gifted all have the right to attend New York City public schools. Moreover, there is a wide array of special K-6 and pre-school programs for youngsters with special needs. To learn what options are available to you, call your district (see STEP 1 and STEP 2 on pages 3 & 4) and ask to speak with the District Administrator for Special Education, for Bilingual or Bicultural Education or for Gifted and Talented Programs. Also, see "PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS" on page 9 of this pamphlet.





► **HOMELESS FAMILIES:** Children who are homeless and live in shelters, hotels or motels are entitled to attend New York City public schools. For information and assistance, you may call the Office of Students in Temporary Housing, at (718) 935-3352

SPECIAL NOTE: Free/reduced-rate meals. Many children are eligible to receive free or reduced-rate breakfasts and lunches at school. If you think you may qualify, make sure to complete and return the confidential federal form that is sent home from school with your child at the beginning of the school year.

Step 1

Find out what district you live in

New York City has 32 community school districts; each district has several elementary schools. If you are not sure which school district you live in, you can find out easily by calling (718) 935-3566.



Step 2

Find out which school within your district your child is entitled to attend

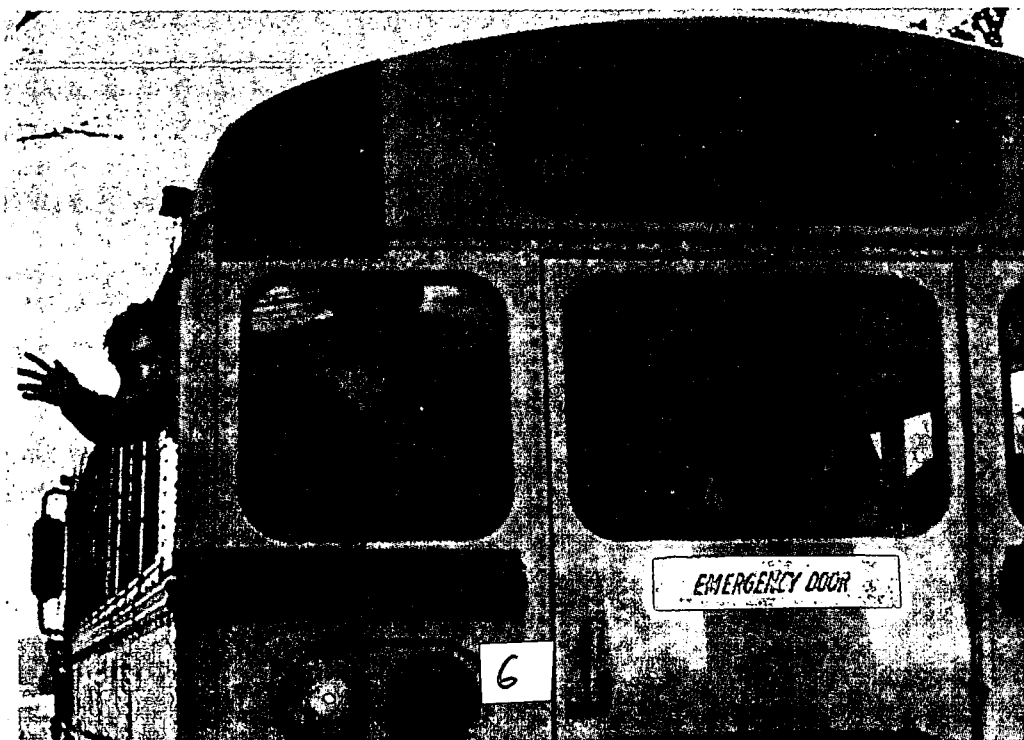
Uncertain which school your child should be attending? Simply call your district office and tell them your address. On the basis of where you live, the district office will tell you which “zoned” school your child is designated to attend.



Call your district office to find out about when and how to register your child. All community school district office telephone numbers are listed on the back page of this pamphlet.



Children in kindergarten, first and second grade are entitled to free school bus service to and from school if they live at least one-half mile from their zoned school or if they live in a shelter, hotel or motel.



Step 3

Find out about other schools or programs in your district that may be appropriate for your child.

The New York City public schools offer a modified "Parent Choice" system. This means that you may apply to enroll your child in a school other than your zoned school, within or outside your district.

You may want to explore other schools if the one serving your neighborhood doesn't meet your child's specific needs. Every school is different from all others. You may prefer a school other than your zoned school. Or, you may want to send your child to one of the "magnet schools" throughout the city that offer enriched programs designed to attract students from the local district and from outside the district.

About half the school districts publish a brochure describing all the schools within the district, as well as programs for children with special interests, abilities and needs. If you're interested in the "Parent Choice" option, call your district office and, if it has such a publication, request a copy. If not, ask to speak with someone who can provide you with





information you need about different schools in the district.

To learn more about a specific school or program, call the school directly to arrange a visit. When you're there, you'll have an opportunity to tour the facility, meet with teachers and administrators, observe classes and request an application.



You may find out the standardized reading and math test scores for any school by calling the Office of Educational Research. The number is on the back page of this pamphlet. You may also get school "report cards" with test scores and various statistics about each school from the school's district office.

If you decide to apply to a different school in your district, get an application from the school and complete and return it as soon as possible. Also make sure to ask your district office if you must get a variance, or permission to register your child in a school other than the zoned school.



N.B.: If your child attends a different school or a special program in your district, he or she might not be entitled to free school bus service, regardless of how far you live from the school. Make sure to clarify this with both the school and your district office.

Step 4



Applying to schools in other districts

Under the Parent Choice system, you may decide that you want to send your child to a school in a different district. Each district has its own rules for accepting children from other districts. But, as long as there is room, you have the right to have your application considered fairly.

To pursue this option, call the district office for the school(s) in which you are interested and ask for information and details on application procedures (including filing deadlines.) District telephone numbers are listed on the back of this pamphlet. Then call the school to arrange a visit.



Make sure to file the application by the deadline. If your child is already enrolled in your own district, you will also need to file a transfer request with the superintendent of the new district.



Except for certain situations, free school bus service is not available to elementary-school children who transfer to a different district.



Extra Steps: Programs and services for children with special needs

► CHILDREN WITH EDUCATIONAL DISABILITIES:

Beginning in pre-school — and, in some cases, at age three — children with educational disabilities are entitled to a free evaluation and a free public education in the least restrictive environment.

Each district has a Committee on Pre-School Special Education (CPSE), which arranges evaluations and recommends programs and services. You have the right to work with the CPSE to make an "Individualized Educational Plan" (IEP) for your child.

The rights, rules and regulations for children with disabilities can be difficult to understand. If you have a question or need help setting up an appropriate IEP or school plan, call Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., at (718) 624-8450.



Children with educational disabilities may be placed in schools other than their zoned schools. If so, they will be provided with free transportation to and from school.



► **CHILDREN WHO NEED BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION:**

Children who speak little or no English are entitled to receive bilingual education. Instruction is offered on three levels, depending on whether the child has no knowledge of English, some fluency, or a good command of the language. If you think your child can benefit from bilingual education — and to make sure your child is placed in the right program — **call your district and ask to speak to the Coordinator of Bilingual or Multicultural Education.**



- **GIFTED CHILDREN:** Almost every district has special programs for gifted and talented children. Some start in kindergarten, others in first or second grade. Each district sets its own rules for determining eligibility. While all districts ask for a special application, some also require an I.Q. test, some require a school visit and some require both. If your district requires an I.Q. test and you cannot afford to pay for it, ask the district office about applying for a fee waiver.

You may apply to the Gifted and Talented schools and programs in any district. To learn about them, how to apply and how to arrange for your child to take any mandatory tests, **call the districts you are interested in and ask to speak to the Coordinator of Gifted and Talented programs.**



Children enrolled in Gifted and Talented programs and schools are entitled to free bus service, whether or not they attend school in their own district.

Last But Not Least: Stay involved



Being part of your child's education is rewarding and helps ensure that your child receives the best education possible. Once your child is in school, stay involved:

► **ATTEND PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES:**

You'll have an opportunity to meet with your child's teacher twice a year at Parent/Teacher conferences. This is an excellent time to help the teacher understand your child better and learn from the teacher how you can help your child at home. Of course, you don't have to wait for Parent/Teacher conferences. Your child's teacher will be happy to speak with you by phone or in person whenever it's convenient for both of you.



► **JOIN THE PARENT ASSOCIATION OR PARENT/TEACHER ASSOCIATION:**

Every school has either a PA or PTA. Joining gives you a way to communicate with the school administration about teachers, classes, safety, special projects, your child's progress and any other concerns.

- **HELP YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK:** Homework is part of your child's education. Help make it complete by checking to make sure assignments are completed and helping when needed. If you or your child need assistance, call Dial-A-Teacher from 4:00 -7:00 p.m. The telephone number is on the back of this pamphlet.





► **COMMUNICATE:** When you have questions or concerns, talk to your child's teacher, guidance counselor, the assistant principal, the principal or the district office. Make sure your questions are answered.



If you cannot get the assistance you need, call Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., at (718) 624-8450.





Helpful Telephone Numbers



To Learn Your District, NYC
Board of Education Office of
Zoning and Integration
(718) 935-3566

To Obtain Test Scores, Office
of Educational Research
(718) 935-3777

For Homework Help, Dial-A-
Teacher (212) 777-3380

To Get Assistance For Homeless
Children, NYC Board of
Education Office of Students in
Temporary Housing
(718) 935-3352

Advocates for Children of New
York, Inc. (718) 624-8450

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

District 1 (212) 602-9701

District 2 (212) 330-9400

District 3 (212) 678-2880

District 4 (212) 860-5858

District 5 (212) 769-7500

District 6 (212) 795-4111

District 7 (718) 292-0481

District 8 (718) 409-8100

District 9 (718) 681-6160

District 10 (718) 584-7070

District 11 (718) 519-2614

District 12 (718) 328-2310

District 13 (718) 636-3204

District 14 (718) 963-4800

District 15 (718) 330-9300

District 16 (718) 919-0323

District 17 (718) 604-4200

District 18 (718) 927-5100

District 19 (718) 272-8033

District 20 (718) 692-5200

District 21 (718) 714-2500

District 22 (718) 368-8000

District 23 (718) 270-8600

District 24 (718) 417-2600

District 25 (718) 281-7600

District 26 (718) 631-6900

District 27 (718) 642-5700

District 28 (718) 830-8800

District 29 (718) 978-5900

District 30 (718) 777-4600

District 31 (718) 390-1600

District 32 (718) 574-1125



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

UD033708

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: HOW TO CHOOSE A PUBLIC SCHOOL: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG NYC SCHOOL CHILDREN	
Author(s): LAURA DUKES AND ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK, INC.	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date: 1998

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY _____ Sample _____ TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

Level 1



Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY _____ Sample _____ TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

Level 2A



Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY _____ Sample _____ TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2B

Level 2B



Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, →

Signature:	Printed Name/Position/Title: JILL CHAIFETZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Organization/Address: ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN 151 W 30TH ST, 5TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10001	Telephone: 212-947-9779 E-Mail Address: jchaifetz@advocatesforchildren.org
	FAX: 212-947-9790 Date: 7/21/2000



(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

**ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
Box 40
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027**